

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 001587

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/02/2011

TAGS: PREL PGOV MASS MARR KCRM SNAR ETRD NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH NSA ON REGIONAL AND OTHER ISSUES

Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter, reason 1.5(B/D)

**¶1.** (C) Ambassador Jeter met July 2 with National Security Advisor (NSA) Aliyu Mohammed. Regional issues dominated discussions. The NSA noted GON support for "internal dialogue" outside Liberia. He indicated the GON would host an Abuja-based John Garang/Sadiq Al-Mahdi meeting on Sudan, and voiced support for an expanded UN presence in DROC. The NSA said Jonas Savimbi had requested a meeting with Obasanjo, but the GON wished to speak to Angolan President Dos Santos first. He indicated GON support for Namibian Foreign Minister Gurirab for the OAU SecGen position, and said that the Western Sahara did have a full-fledged Embassy in Abuja. Regarding bilateral mil-mil assistance, the NSA said that all OFR trucks had now been accounted for, including the two that had gone missing, and would be shipped to Sierra Leone for use by the Nigerian UNAMSIL contingent. He pledged to solve the problem of lack of counterparts for MPRI after the Ambassador indicated the program appeared to be failing. Mohammed also asked for another complete set of requirements for the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) assessment, said the GON would work hard to combat trafficking in women and children, indicated renewed efforts to ensure a larger budget for NDLEA, and said Obasanjo would convene a meeting of Niger Delta leaders with oil companies, NGOs, and community stakeholders to once again explore the prospects for peace and development. Embassy asked that the Embassy also be invited to this meeting. End summary.

**¶2.** (U) Ambassador Jeter met July 2 with the NSA, General (ret.) Aliyu Mohammed, in Abuja. Also in attendance were Regional Affairs Counselor Twombly paying his farewell call, and Poloff. Mohammed's Assistant, Colonel Idris was also present as notetaker. This meeting was designed, inter alia, as a follow-up on regional issues raised by President Obasanjo during his May visit to Washington.

**¶3.** (C) On Sierra Leone, the NSA optimistically assessed the disarmament process, although he expressed concern, with the rainy season underway, of possible weather delays. Unaware that Ambassador William Swing's name had surfaced regarding the UN SRSG position in Sierra Leone, the NSA said that the GON would probably prefer that Ambassador Adeniji continue in that position, but he would "check on that." Ambassador told the NSA that from the indirect reading he had gotten from President Obasanjo during an earlier inquiry, the issue seemed to be closed and we were not asking that it be revisited. Ambassador Jeter said that he was simply informing the NSA so that he would be aware.

**¶4.** (C) On the subject of "internal dialogue" in Liberia, Ambassador Jeter reprised his discussion with ECOWAS ExecSec Kouyate and gave his view that any attempt to include Taylor or conduct the dialogue within Liberia would risk both legitimizing Taylor and embittering Conte of Guinea. It had to be done outside Liberia. The NSA, although humorously paraphrasing a local proverb, "You can't shave a head if the head (Taylor's) isn't there," said that the GON would be willing to host such a "dialogue," or support it logistically at some other forum outside Liberia, if the U.S. thought this would be worthwhile. Ambassador said that this was not a U.S. issue, and it was really up to the region to decide how to proceed. Kouyate still seemed very interested in the idea, Ambassador said. "I will contact President Konaré of Mali," the NSA replied, "and Executive Secretary Kouyate on this."

**¶5.** (C) On Sudan, Mohammed said that the GON would soon host a meeting between John Garang and Sadiq al-Mahdi, and that al-Mahdi was already in the country. Obasanjo would also raise the issue at the upcoming OAU summit in Lusaka. Mohammed said that the general perception within the GON was that Garang was the problem. Ambassador Jeter responded that the USG was reviewing its Sudan policy, particularly regarding Sudan's support for terrorism, its interference with humanitarian operations, and the likely prospect of a viable peace process. Past bombings of humanitarian workers had provoked widespread anger within the USG, the Ambassador said. The NSA said the GON had asked Sudan to halt the

bombing, and thought that it had, but Jeter said it was not so clear that Sudan was complying with this request, beyond a brief pause. Ambassador said that we would seek up-to-date information from the department on current humanitarian operations.

16. (C) On the DROC, Mohammed expressed general satisfaction with Kabila the Younger during his short reign as President. The country faced an enormous number of problems, not the least being the continuing presence of elements of nine foreign armies on her soil, he said. But Kabila was performing well. Nigeria had 33 police trainers in Kinshasa, and looked for other ways to assist, he said. The clear solution, he noted, was greater UN involvement, together with useful interventions by outside parties.

17. (C) On Angola, the NSA said that Savimbi had asked for a meeting with Obasanjo, but he had been told to "stand by." The GON meant to check with President Dos Santos before taking any action on Savimbi's request, said Mohammed. Obasanjo hoped to confer with Dos Santos at the OAU summit in Lusaka. Moving briefly to the race for the Secretary General of the OAU, Mohammed said that the GON supported Namibian Foreign Minister Gurirab. An earlier deal involving SADC support for Konare of Mali had fallen through when Konare withdrew, and now the GON felt obligated to support Gurirab, particularly given the request of President Mbeki of South Africa to do so.

18. (C) On Western Sahara, Mohammed acknowledged that the GON had opened official relations with the Sharawi Republic, but he was not sure at what level. (Note: the Moroccan Embassy tells us that the Sahrawi Embassy is represented by an Ambassador, and that the Sahrawi Mission enjoys the normal range of diplomatic contacts with the GON. End Note). The NSA went on to say that the GON supported the Baker UN initiative, hoped it would continue, and hoped the Bush Administration would support it, too.

19. (C) On bilateral mil/mil assistance, the Ambassador said that matters were proceeding "much better" on various fronts. The DATT enjoyed a much better relationship with his counterparts. The three bases had been identified for OFR III, and work would begin soon to ready them for OFR training. The Ambassador noted that, on the subject of trucks for OFR III, unless the trucks now in Nigeria from OFR I were sent to Sierra Leone, we would be unable to provide trucks for OFR III.

10. (C) Idris responded that all were now accounted for, and would be shipped. The NSA pledged to speak to the Chief of Army Staff on this issue. On the question of the Forward Operating Base (FOB) for OFR III, the USG preferred to use Abuja, but had not seen any progress on this decision. The NSA recommended that the Ambassador speak to Minister of Defense Danjuma about the FOB. (Comment. We have done so, and hope we have a decision from Danjuma before he leaves for foreign travel later today, July 5. End comment.)

11. (C) On MPRI, the Ambassador said that the program risked being a failure without proper counterparts for the MPRI personnel. Mohammed said that "we are working on this," including the provision of retired officers as counterparts. "We will make this work," he said. Regarding the request from the National Assembly that MPRI open an office at the Assembly building, the NSA requested that, although it was an idea with merit, "this should not be done now."

12. (C) The conversation finished with several bilateral issues, tracking the Ambassador's earlier conversation with the President. The NSA asked for a new complete set of the requirements for compliance with the Financial Action Task Force (septel). He expressed surprise at the lack of proper information, and said he would meet with Finance Minister Ciroma and Attorney General Ige to ensure proper forwarding of the required information. The NSA was aware that narcotics certification was a yearly exercise, and he said that the Obasanjo Administration was working hard to win a sufficient budget for the NDLEA from the National Assembly (now putting the finishing touches on a FY 2001 Supplemental Budget). The NSA also acknowledged the rising crime problem in Lagos, noted the recent success of checkpoints on Ikoyi and Victoria islands, and said "we will succeed" in reducing crime.

13. (C) When the Ambassador expressed concern on the apparent rising tension in the Niger Delta, the NSA noted the recent hostage taking, peacefully resolved, at Bonny Island, and

said President Obasanjo would convene a meeting of oil and service industry executives, traditional and political leaders in the Delta, members of the National Assembly, and South-South State Governors to discuss the events in the region. "We are in touch with Exxon/Mobil nearly every day," he said, and "we are aware of their concerns." At Ambassador Jeter's request, the NSA said that the Embassy could send an observer to this meeting. He also agreed with the Ambassador's assessment that the Production Sharing Contracts bid process was slow, but did not offer an opinion on the matter. Digressing for a moment, on the question of trafficking of women and children from Nigeria, the NSA noted the close involvement of a small NGO headed by Vice President Atiku's wife in this issue, and said he would contact the Attorney General and the Inspector General of Police to encourage redoubled efforts to discourage trafficking. Finally, the Ambassador handed over a letter concerning the National ID Card project from Chams/Polaroid Consortium, which the NSA pledged to study and refer to the proper officials.

114. (C) Comment. As always, the NSA proved attentive, helpful and willing to intervene where his assistance could be useful. There has already been significant follow-up on the issues raised with the NSA and the President. End comment.  
Jeter